

FULL-NAME PALINDROMES

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For many years, wordsmiths have been devising anagrams based on the first name and surname of all sorts of people, usually famous ones. Some examples:

Margaret Thatcher	that great charmer
Julius Caesar	casual juries
Adolf Hitler	hated for ill
Alfred Hitchcock	child of the crack

Sometimes a nickname, middle name, initial or even a title is used:

Chrissie Evert	it's her service
Martin Luther King	line marking truth
Dwight D. Eisenhower	wow! he's right indeed
Sir Winston Churchill	his sort will crunch on

Over the same period, hundreds of palindromes have also been composed, but only a tiny fraction of them incorporate the first and last name of an actual person. The reason for this is fairly obvious - just try getting anything sensible from the reversals of the names above!

Two rare examples of this genre are recorded in Howard Bergeron's classic work Palindromes and Anagrams (Dover Publications, 1973). The first features Martin Gardner, renowned for his "Mathematical Games" columns in *Scientific American*, and the second, British writer Iris Murdoch. Both were written by the English palindromist J.A. Lindon.

Dian, I am reviled, I turn,
 I dump **Martin Gardner**,
 I rend rag 'n' I tramp mud in rut,
 I deliver main aid.
 (from "How I Won the War")

"Drat such cod!" "Rum, sir?" ("I'm orf!")
 Marcel: "Liver, grisette?"
 "Lemonade? Cider? Free beer, Fred - iced?"
 "An omelette, Sir Greville? Cram!"
 From Iris Murdoch: "Custard?"
 (literary luncheon)

A couple of longer full-name palindromes, based on former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, are featured in the article "Nim Aid, Idi Amin" in the February 1979 **Word Ways**. Here is one of them:

Idiots! O pen an epos to Idi;
 - Cite negro fetor!
 Will age kill Amin,
 As I hem a newer enemy?
 A leer frets no man I'm aiding;
 I arraign Idi Amin,
 - A monster!
 Free laymen ere we name
 His animal-like gall:
 I wrote for genetic Idiots,
 "Open an epos to Idi!"
 (Missionary's lament)

As an experiment, I decided to analyse the names of 200 New Zealand Scrabble players to see how many could be worked into a reasonably coherent palindrome. After much deliberation, I concluded that only ten (five per cent) were worthy of being immortalized in sotadic verse:

We plow a still acre;
 Vote Bill Barclay!
 Or a royal crab'll (I bet)
 Overcall it - saw ol' pew!

Net foreleg, Den;
 I've known Eve,
 I even won!
 - Kevin Edgeler (often!).

Yes I am, Leon,
 Still a fossil-box;
 O Bliss of All,
 It's Noel Maisey!

To "gill" a six, enamel it,
 Revel! Casinos?
 Ret, tap, nail a total -
 Ian Patterson is
 a clever tile-man
 ("ex" is all I got!).

Wolf rob Belle - wo!
 Penny Lane is nix in Siena;
 Lynne Powell - ebb or flow?

Garbed in small rig,
 gibe it too
 bar a bra

Be "killer apparel"
 Like Barbara Boot,
 tie big girl
 lam snide brag.

Sin, Nel - go to Glennis Hale,
 To manic, inapt panic
 In a motel.
 Ah! Sin, Nel, go to Glennis

Not Lima; hot, pure pace?
 Room at Irontown, wot?
 No, Rita Moore,
 Capar up to Hamilton!

Not "S" - gone, eroded, iced;
 A "U", a "P", an "A", an "A"...
 Paua! (decide) - Doreen Ogston.

Hex of a siren,
 Raw draw - oh, wow!
 Howard Warner is a fox, eh?

Finally, here is a palindrome dedicated to the editor of **Word Ways**:

Ross E's say -
 "Go logology, ale,
 donuts and sex!"
 (I'm no slob myself).
 - It's Ross Eckler!
 O Stars, a Sun!
 Word Ways' editor is

regarded a "fond" Ed.
 No faded rager, sir.
 O Tides, yaw!
 Drown us all as
 rats or elk:
 Cess or stifle?
 Symbols on mixes,
 (DNA, STU) no delay;
 Go, logology-assessor!

WHAT DO YOU CALL A PERSON FROM...?

This is the title of Paul Dickson's latest book, published in 1990 by Facts on File for \$19.95. A person from Indiana is called a Hoosier; a person from Cambridge MA is called a Cantabridgian; a person from Troy NY is called a Trojan. Demonyms such as these should be familiar to Word Ways readers. The late Don Laycock wrote about French town inhabitants in May 1986, as did the Word Wurcher in August; Mary Stewart Craig and Vernon MacLaren later looked at the humorous side (are Fargoers affected with wanderlust? do Baltimoreans come from Baltimore?) in November 1987 and May 1988.

Dickson's book contains several thousand demonyms, obtained from published sources, unpublished corpuses such as the Tamony Collection at the University of Missouri, and correspondence with hundreds of people. Some of the entries take the form of short essays: read the discussions on Hoosier (don't call one an Indianian!), Dutch (for pejorative names), and Bunnies (for gag names). A few people have attempted to codify rules for such nomenclature (if the placename ends in Y, change it to an I and add AN; if the placename ends in silent E, omit the E and add ITE), but these rules are riddled with exceptions (are Parisians called Parisites?). Dickson takes the sensible view that the correct demonym is the one actually used by the inhabitants, not the one adhering to a rule. The French seem to be most idiosyncratic in their nomenclature; Dickson has included more examples from that country than would be justified strictly on the basis of a familiarity with the cities and towns cited.